

Washington, D.C. - Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) announced that Evans County will receive close to \$500,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) grants from the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA).

According to the Department of Justice, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) solicited "applications for initiatives which assist law enforcement in rural states and rural areas. The Assistance to Rural Law Enforcement to Combat Crime and Drugs Program, administered by BJA, helps rural states and rural areas to prevent and combat crime, especially drug-related crime, and provides for national support efforts, including training and technical assistance programs strategically targeted to address rural needs."

"Rural areas have their own challenges when it comes to fighting crime," said Barrow, "and this money will go to the folks who know how to handle those problems. Just because we're going through tough economic times doesn't mean we have to sacrifice our safety.

This will also create jobs, while protecting our communities at the same time."

Priority consideration was given to local law enforcement agencies in rural areas where the local government is not eligible to receive a direct allocation from the Recovery Act Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program or received a direct allocation that was \$50,000 or less.

Applicants were invited to submit a proposal under any one of the following categories to: (1) combat rural crime, (2) improve rural law enforcement investigations, (3) enhance rural detention and jail operations, (4) facilitate rural justice information sharing, or (5) develop a national training and technical assistance program.

Under Category 1, Evans County will use the award to support the Evans County Sheriff's Office (ECSO) with a Community Response Reaction Team project. The goals of the project are to enhance law enforcement effectiveness by reducing drug and violent gang activity while being sensitive to public relationships.

The ECSO will use funds to hire personnel, administer training, purchase vehicles and tactical and general equipment, and implement the Spartan Webb RMS computer database.

The grant will enhance community policing by providing funds to allow deputies to interact with citizens at events, town hall meetings, churches, and schools. The computer system will establish an intelligence database that will enhance data sharing and communication, leading to a higher rate of arrests and convictions of violators.

Overall, the funds will allow for increased efficiency, and enhancement of communication with citizens, interagency committee representatives, and member law enforcement agencies.

More information about this grant can be found by contacting the Office of Justice Program's Office of Communications at (202) 307-0703.

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